

REMARKS

Please reconsider the application in view of the above amendments and the following remarks. Applicant thanks the Examiner for indicating that claims 35, 36, and 51 are allowable.

The Applicant respectfully notes that the formal drawings and information disclosure statement sent on January 27, 2004, were not acknowledged by the Examiner in the final Office Action. The Applicant respectfully requests that the Examiner communicate acceptance of these documents.

Disposition of Claims

Claims 1-60 are pending in this application. Claims 10, 11, 14, 16, 25, 26, 28, 29, 33, 39-50, 53, and 54 were previously withdrawn, and are now canceled by way of this reply. Additionally, claims 1-5, 12, 13, 15, 18-20, 23, 31, 32, 37, 38, and 56-60 have been canceled by way of this reply. Of the remaining claims, claims 35 and 51 are independent. The remaining claims depend, directly or indirectly, from claims 35 and 51.

Amendments to the Claims

Claims 6-9, 17, 21, 22, 24, 27, and 52 have been amended to depend from claims 35 and 51, which were found to be allowable by the Examiner. Additional amendments were made to those claims to be consistent with the language of claims 35 and 51. No new matter has been added to the claims. The amendments were made to expedite prosecution of the application, and should not be considered to prejudice future applications to obtain the canceled claims.

Rejection(s) under 35 U.S.C § 103

REJECTIONS OF CLAIMS 1-9, 18-21, 27, AND 30:

Claims 1-9, 18-21, 27, and 30 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,145,740 (“McClean”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,172,562 (“Smith”). Claims 1-5 and 18-20 have been canceled. Thus, the rejection to these claims is now moot. Additionally, claims 6, 21, and 27 have been amended to depend from claim 51, which the Examiner has found to be allowable. Claims 7-9 and 30, due to the amendments, depend from claim 51. Claims 6-9, 21, 27, and 30 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 51. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTION OF CLAIM 22:

Claim 22 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McClean in view of Smith, as applied above to claim 1, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 3,970,495 (“Ashton”). Claim 22 has been amended in this reply to depend from claim 35, which the Examiner found to be allowable. Thus, claim 22 is allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTIONS OF CLAIMS 12 AND 17:

Claims 12 and 17 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McClean in view of Smith, as applied above to claim 1, and further in view of and U.S. Patent No. 4,359,356 (“Kornbichler”). Claim 12 has been canceled in this reply. Thus, the rejection to claim 12 is now moot. Claim 17 has been amended to depend from claim 51, which the Examiner has found to be allowable. Thus, claim 17 is allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTIONS OF CLAIMS 13-15 AND 23-25:

Claims 13-15 and 23-25 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over McClean in view of Smith and Kornbichler, as applied above to claim 12, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,032,211 (“Shinno”). Claims 13-15, 23, and 25 have been canceled. Thus, the rejection to these claims is now moot. Claim 24 has been amended to depend from claim 51, which the Examiner has found to be allowable. Thus, claim 24 is allowable for at least the same reasons. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTION OF CLAIM 31:

Claim 31 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kornbichler in view of Smith. Claim 31 has been canceled. Thus, this rejection is now moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTIONS OF CLAIMS 32-34 AND 37-39:

Claims 32-34 and 37-39 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kornbichler in view of Smith as applied above to claim 31, and further in view of Shinno. Claims 32-34 and 37-39 have been canceled. Thus, this rejection is now moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTIONS OF CLAIMS 52 AND 55:

Claims 52 and 55 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kornbichler in view of Smith, McClean and Shinno. Claim 52 has been amended to depend from claim 35, which the Examiner has found to be allowable. Claim 55, which depends from claim 52, now indirectly depends from claim 35 due to the amendment to claim 52. Thus, claims 52 and 55 are allowable for at least the same reasons as claim 35. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

REJECTIONS OF CLAIMS 56-60:

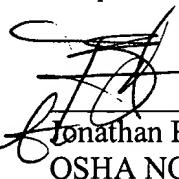
Claims 56-60 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Kornbichler in view of Smith, McClean, Shinno as applied above to claim 51, and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,942,059 ("Wulker"). Claims 56-60 have been canceled. Thus, this rejection is now moot. Accordingly, withdrawal of this rejection is respectfully requested.

Conclusion

Applicant believes this reply is fully responsive to all outstanding issues and places this application in condition for allowance. If this belief is incorrect, or other issues arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned or his associates at the telephone number listed below. Please apply any charges not covered, or any credits, to Deposit Account 50-0591 (Reference Number 09432/130002).

Respectfully submitted,

Date: 4/7/04


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